

## **Memorial Human Rights Center considers Nadiya Savchenko a political prisoner**

Nadiya Savchenko — former pilot in the Ukrainian Ground Forces and current member of the Verkhovna Rada and Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in absentia — has been charged with article 105 of the Russian Criminal Code (“Aiding to murder two or more persons committed by a group of persons with generally dangerous methods motivated by national hatred”) and article 322 (“Illegal crossing of the state border of the Russian Federation”). According to official information, Savchenko was detained on June 30, 2014 and formally arrested on July 2, 2014 while living in a Russian hotel. In fact she was abducted from Ukrainian territory on June 17, 2014 and was brought to Russia on June 24, 2014. She is currently held in a pre-trial detention facility in Novocherkassk.

According to the prosecution, on June 17, 2014 Savchenko entered the territory controlled by self-proclaimed Luhansk People's Republic as part of the Aidar Battalion and was assigned to identify targets and direct mortar fire to "murder an unlimited number of civilians", which led to the death of two Russian journalists - Anton Voloshin and Igor Kornelyuk. She then gained entrance to the Russian city of Voronezh disguised as a refugee.

Savchenko maintains that on June 17, 2014 she was abducted in Metalist a village in Luhansk by members of the Donbass People's Militia, a pro-Russian separatist group. The abduction occurred one and a half hours before the Russian journalists' death, as confirmed by Savchenko's cell phone records. On July 15, 2014 the European Court of Human Rights began a case on her behalf, which was given priority as especially urgent. On August 27, 2014 she was ordered to undergo forced psychiatric evaluation at Moscow's Serbsky Center which is notorious for examining dissidents in the Soviet Union. On December 15, 2014 Savchenko declared a hunger strike in order to protest the refusal of prison officials to allow treatment of her ear infection. The hunger strike lasted for 83 days.

The case against Nadiya Savchenko is part of a broader propaganda campaign that the Russian government initiated against the Ukraine after the regime change in Kiev in February of 2014. The Russian government, both covertly and overtly, supports armed separatists in the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts of the Ukraine through means that include direct military intervention. Savchenko's case represents an attempt to demonize the Ukraine and intimidate critics of the war in Russia.

The Memorial Human Rights Center calls for the immediate release of Nadiya Savchenko and demands the dismissal of all charges against her.

*The Memorial Human Rights Center does not necessarily endorse the views, statements or actions of persons recognized as political prisoners.*

More details on this case are available in Russian [here](#).